

EXHIBIT A

By Kate Jordan

(Mrs. F. M. Vermilye)

BETWEEN the matinée and the performance at night, Miss Cawtrety always had a light dinner served in her dressing-room. In the most exquisite of negligées, with flowers about her, and occasional intimates dropping in for a few moments' gossip, she was wont to lie on her divan in the state of relaxation prescribed by her fashionable physician.

Miss Dora Cawtrety was leading woman at The Regent, a small, long-established London theatre, whose box- and stall-patrons had, for the most part, their names in Debrett. The play might be unpopular, but the star's personality "drew," because she was an enchanting beauty who was also a tantalizing mystery. No one knew anything about her. Her history—prior to the Autumn night when she walked on in "Notre Dame," as a court lady with but one line to say, and took away the breath of the watchers by her surprising loveliness—was lost in a mist which Miss Cawtrety never lifted. She never talked of her childhood, her parentage, former places or people. She seemed born without any past prior to her twenty-fourth year of age. When wonderful things were told of her early life, she smiled. When a charming, romantic history was hinted at, she smiled. Her smile was lovely. When any one had the curiosity boldly to question her, she stared. Her stare was disquieting. She was a sphinx. She might have manufactured a most bewitching history for herself had she cared to do so, and no one would have questioned it. But Dora had her

code, and a teller of lies was hateful to her.

"If she were only a foreigner, you know, one could accept her without question," Lord Dugro had said, at his club. "As an American, her mother might have done the washing in a mining camp—and who would care? As a Frenchwoman, she might have had forebears in the pomade and coiffure line, and we'd have swallowed the whole bally thing, you know. But this woman, the loveliest creature under heaven, against whom there is no whisper in the present, whom we welcome in our homes, and need and want and delight in, don't you know, but who never speaks of herself, and about whom we know nothing—is an Englishwoman! She's never even admitted that much. But she *is* English in blood, bone, sinew, voice, expression, movement. Yet, who and what she was before she came out at The Regent, I defy any one to find out."

This expressed London's opinion generally, yet no one was in the least surprised when Dora Cawtrety's engagement to the young Duke of Bracebridge was announced, and the news was bruited over the world that the King had been the first to congratulate her. Miss Cawtrety was "chummy" with kings, princes and the like.

So, on the particular afternoon when she lay upon her divan in her dressing-room, after the matinée, with roses almost as tall as herself bending their perfumed heads from great vases near her, she was thinking of Bracebridge, and her eyes, of an odd, glistening slate-blue, were warm with her

dreams, for she loved him extremely. His title and the splendor of his wealth were on one side, and held her but little; on the other, he, in the strength, confidence and beauty of his twenty-eight clean years, engrossed her completely. Strange as it may appear, Dora loved this man, who happened to be a duke.

For the twentieth time, she read his last letter. It was an expression of idolatry from the first line to the last. She kissed it, tucked it under the silk pillow, her hand, with the big, ruby engagement-ring, clasping it. She closed her eyes. Far off, it seemed many miles beyond her land of dreams, she heard Suzanne's metallic French voice:

"Dis pairson cannot to see Miss Cawtre—*non*. She is rest herself, and she cannot to see dis pairson."

"E soys—" she heard Grigson, the door-keeper, commence, and then break off. "Well, by Jingo, 'ere 'e his 'is bloomin' self—cheeky fer a Hitalian, s' 'eaven 'elp me!"

Still Dora, with her fingers clasping her ducal love-letter, dreamed on. It was a usual thing for many people to attempt to see her, when she had no desire to lay eyes upon them.

"Mees Cawtre cannot see you. W'at ees your business? If you tell me, I will spik wiz her," she heard Suzanne continue, irritably.

"Just give her my card, please. You need say nothing."

Before the last sentence was completed—in fact, before three words had been spoken—Dora's expression had changed. The dream fled from her face. A look leaped into it not unlike that of a listening animal expecting danger. She moved quickly to her elbow. Her features stiffened. Suzanne found her so when she came cautiously in, her black eyes snapping with temper. Dora heard nothing she said. She took the card, and fixed a frozen stare upon it: "Arturo Boldino."

"He may come in," she said, rising, and sweeping out the laces on her gown.

Suzanne obeyed, with a feeling of awe; her mistress looked like the dead. A moment later, the visitor entered alone, and found Miss Cawtre standing straight and tall and very proud, her eyes level with his. The man was a Latin, but his precise nationality could not be determined in a glance; Italian, perhaps, or a Levantine, or a Spaniard; so much his black eyes, his oiled, curled hair, full lips, light figure, accentuated dressing and aggressive extract of musk, proclaimed.

"What do you want?" Dora asked, as she might speak to a dismissed servant who ventured to annoy her.

The man parted his mustache, lovingly, sneered and smiled.

"In the English climate, you have grown very businesslike, Miss Jenny Green."

He could see that the name was like a lash through the thin cloak. Though she shivered, she remained with her head up, an abysmal contempt in her level gaze.

"What do you want?" she asked, again. "I can give you ten minutes; so, say whatever you have come to say. Ten minutes." She pointed to the clock.

"Then, I must be businesslike, too," he smiled. "Shall we not sit down?" She appeared not to hear him, and again looked at the clock. "No? Then, you force us both to be uncomfortable, instead of cozy—as such old friends should be. Eh? Well, I see you are not disposed to talk. You are in one of those icy moods which used to annoy your—protector. Ah, how he used to fly up when you looked at him so! He had a temper, despite his sixty-odd years, had your good friend, Rica."

Dora stood patiently, her face unchanging.

"Is it bad taste to recall those days? But I do it for a purpose. It is that you may realize how very deeply my finger is in the very good, rich pie of your very successful, flattered life."

"Let me congratulate you," said Dora, with an air of weariness. "You

speak English better than when you were Señor Rica's servant."

He laughed, and, drawing out his perfumed handkerchief, caressed his lips with it.

"Dear lady, at last I hear something from you besides the eternal and very rude question—what do you want? Believe me, your commendation is most sweet to me. For, see, I am ambitious. When you came first to Matanzas, eight years ago, and lived your secluded life with my master behind those white walls, I was a coachman first, then a valet. After you disappeared, and your hat and little boat were found drifting in the Yumuri—in fact, after your death, when it was inferred your beautiful body had been carried out to the sea—I became secretary to Señor Rica. On his death, it was found that I was remembered most generously in his will. There are those who said I had taken advantage of his condition when he was half-delirious; but that is nothing. This tells you I am ambitious, does it not?"

She was very white, and her brows met in a line of pain.

"Of course, you have come to sell your silence for money?"

"How you misjudge me!" he said, sadly. "You always did. As Señor Rica's coachman, you thought me a spy. Later, when I was his valet, and merely by applying my ear to the door heard your sobs as he beat you——"

"You loathsome toad!" she muttered, in controlled fury, like a dangerous thing in leash, "if you say another word of that past time, I'll have you flung into the street. What has brought you here? Say it plainly, receive your answer, and go!"

His sneering defiance was now a healthy thing of full growth.

"I will. I am absolutely merciless," he said, dropping his sentimental tone. "I was in India when I picked up an English paper, and read of you—read also that one of your peculiarities was an objection to being much photographed, except occasionally in costume, as Lady Teazle, for instance; an odd dislike in an actress, but we know,

do we not, that wigs and patches make fairly good masks? Well, I thought no more of the newspaper item at the time. Later, a traveling showman came to Bombay with the new invention, the kinetoscope. One of his views showed Bond street on a sunny May day, all movement and sunshine. It was most perfect, and filled the eyes of some of those homesick Anglo-Indians with tears. The foremost figure in the picture was a beautiful woman, who opened her parasol, and stepped into a waiting victoria. It was you. I sat there in amazement, and, of course, knew then that your apparent drowning in Cuba was a cheat, as I had always suspected. I fancied I was looking on Jenny Green, who was flourishing in London under the same conditions as I had known her; but my interest was whipped up when the showman announced that this was one of the few photographs of the beauty and actress, Dora Cawtre. The people around me never knew what made me laugh so heartily. I like being amused that way; it is a great aid to digestion. Well, it is possible I might never have annoyed you; but, after a time, business brought me to London, and I, like the rest of the world, heard the astounding news that the Duke of Bracebridge was to make you his duchess. Then, I made up my mind. You could be useful to me. I first went to see you in your new play. Your blond hair was covered by a red wig, but one good look told me that you were Rica's Jenny. The result?—I am here. You think I want money. I don't. No amount you might offer to pay me would weigh the slightest with me. It is five years since the day your boat was found upturned in the Yumuri, and, since then, I've made much money—oh, very much—in many lands, and not always by very honorable means, I admit to you. You see, we are both adventurers, cheats, liars, and we can speak the truth to each other. Now, I want what money cannot buy—unassailable power, position. You can give me these."

She had turned from him, and her

sad eyes were gazing into the mirror. Pain had wiped the scorn from her face.

"As the Duchess of Bracebridge, you can make me a personage. I shall carefully select an obscure, Levantine title—no one will look me up. Even if they do, no one will believe them. Let the Duchess of Bracebridge vouch for my genuineness, count me as her friend, make me one of her house-parties, take me on her yacht, and my status becomes impregnable. I shall make a marriage for position. I shall actually live in my most impossible dreams."

He was terribly in earnest; his sallowness had become putty-white, his nose was like an eagle's.

When Dora answered him, her voice was hopeless and quiet.

"I refuse you, absolutely."

"Oh, no; you are not mad. I cannot think that."

"I shall say nothing about you. Foist yourself on society, if you will, lie, steal, and I'll not unmask you. But you shall not make me a partner. I will not, even by a nod, recognize your existence."

"And you will be fool enough to ruin yourself, rather than do what I ask?"

"I've not admitted that you can ruin me. It's your word against mine. If I choose to lie—a thing I've never done—I've an idea the Duke of Bracebridge will thrash you soundly."

"Ah, I cannot but admire you. You have the repose of a *grande dame*—you, Jenny Green. It is marvelous. But—alas, for the repose—I have incontrovertible proof." And Boldino sighed. "I have letters written by you to the señor. You were not always averse to being photographed. I have a half-dozen pictures of you, taken in Matanzas, some in the garden with your master and mine, and in several the scar just above your right eyebrow shows plainly. I'll suggest to the duke that he send them to the most important people in Matanzas, to the *alcalde*, and ask the history of the original. Can you, of whom people know nothing, hold up your head and lie down such proof?"

Her gesture silenced him; it was desperate. Her eyes were frantic.

"Very well. We have finished."

"You don't believe I have the pictures—the letters——?"

"I believe you never neglected an opportunity to steal in all your abominable life. Yes, you can crush me, but, rather than save myself by becoming the sponsor, the confederate, of such a thing as you, I'll sacrifice everything dear to me in my life."

She rang the bell, and Suzanne came in. Her mistress's face was ghastly, and the foreigner was bowing low with a strange smile.

"It may possibly interest you to know that I have an appointment with the Duke of Bracebridge at four to-morrow afternoon," he said.

II

It was four o'clock the next day. Dora had done nothing to save herself. Before leaving the theatre after the evening performance, a note from Boldino had been handed her.

"I give you a last chance. Pay my price, and my lips are dumb," it ran.

His messenger waited. Miss Cawtre said there was no answer, and tore the letter to pieces before the boy. She did not sleep all night. During the morning, a basket of gardenias came from Bracebridge, and a letter, asking her to sup at the Carlton that night with his sister, Lady Torrance, and a Russian prince. She answered the short, tender letter, saying she could not go, but would see him in her dressing-room after the play.

The intolerable day, of the wet, low-skied variety, spent itself to late afternoon. Dora's face was fever-flushed; she kept moving nervously, and the blood seemed pouring through her body in streams of fire.

"Get me my walking things," she said to Suzanne, as the clock struck four; "I'm going out."

While the most important and terrifying hour of her life was running its course, the wind and tingling rain would be better than the brooding

quiet of her home. She was soon on the street, veiled, and provided with mackintosh and umbrella. London roared and glistened about her in the rain, but she did not see it. There was a picture before her mind which held her, haunting her, sickening her. She saw Boldino and the Duke of Bracebridge face to face in the crimson library of Gordon House—smiling, oily triumph in the Cuban's eyes; coldness and scorn in her lover's, but with a look there, too, it hurt her to think upon.

Dora walked blindly. London would know to-morrow that her engagement to Bracebridge was broken. Gossip would start, increase, and grow more horrible even than the horrible truth. Boldino would talk everywhere. Her dead life would be galvanized to a revolting reality, and while she might "draw" even more strongly at some less exclusive theatre by reason of salacious curiosity, the homes of the well-ordered, gentle world that she loved would be shut against her forever.

She had walked for a long time before she stopped to notice her surroundings. When she pushed up her veil, and looked about her like one awakening, she saw she had come miles. From Berkeley Square to Soho is a far cry, and it was in one of the unsavory streets of that un-English district that she stood. The place was familiar, though she had not seen it in years. Her gaze drank in the sordid details of it, while dark recollections crowded upon her. But there was a more loathsome neighborhood, even more familiar, and toward that, with a grimness stealing over her face, she now moved.

In the days when Dickens wrote, the Seven Dials was a menace to the prosperous traveler, even in the daylight. Now, by reason of broader streets, one may venture there before the night falls. But, even to-day, a walk through that slum, which edges upon the prosperity of western London, weighs down the heart and imagination with crushing hopelessness.

Dora gazed about with shrinking eyes—at the filth, the mud, the carts with bad fish and wilting vegetables, the many women going in and out the public-houses, whose rotting skirts and shawls alone evidenced their sex; at the shrewd-eyed, diseased, accursed children who clung to them or lay encrusted in dirt on bosoms that were cynicisms of motherhood; at the pallid, undersized, ferret-faced men idling in doorways, and waiting for the night as a harvest-time.

At the corner of Shaftsbury avenue and Endell street, she paused, shuddered, yet turned the corner, and half-way down the awful street, walked more slowly, her eyes upon one house not more conspicuously polluted than its companions. A bare-headed woman leered and swayed in the doorway, her bruised mouth twisted into a laugh as she looked at Dora making her way among the litterings on the pavement.

"There's a toff for you!" she cried, in a quick fury, aiming a bottle at her, which flew wide of the mark. "Wot right's she 'ere a-mockin' of respectable people? Oo's she, oi'd loike to know, with her ambaril an' 'er sating petticut? Maybe there's others as could 'ave sating petticults if they wuz——"

Dora shut her ears to the rest, for the fetid abuse was taken up along the doorways and windows of the street. She turned into Great Earl street, and came out again on Shaftsbury avenue. She was sobbing so uncontrollably that she had to draw her veil down. But something made her pause; the tears seemed to freeze on her cheeks, the sobs to hide in her heart. She gazed with intimate comprehension at a sight familiar enough to the people passing indifferently.

A small girl stood before the window of a fried fish-shop. The stupid and unimaginative would have laughed at her, she was so whimsically dreadful. Eight years of age, perhaps, but the wisdom of fifty dark years flickered evilly from beneath her red lids. Her rags might have been put on in a Mephistophelian humor, for the

point of the colorless, rotting shawl trailed behind her in the mud; the wreck of a man's boots was on her feet; on her dry hair, gray with dust, and elaborately frizzed, there was a woman's hat on which the bare spine of a deceased plume stood straight; and a dotted veil covered her face, with holes large enough to make doorways for every feature.

As Dora bent over her, the small creature looked up. A dull antagonism came into her leaden eyes.

"Come with me. I'll give you something very nice to eat," Dora said, in a pleading, breathless way. There was a desperate brightness in her face.

"Garn!" The child drew back, sullenly.

"Are you afraid of me?"

"Yus."

"Why are you?"

"'Cos."

"I know," Dora said, suddenly, with a heavy sigh; "you think I'm from the church school."

"Yus. I don't goes 'long o' thim."

"But I'm not. I'm an actress. Now, will you come?"

"In a theayter?"

"Yes."

The child allowed Dora to take her hand; she even allowed herself to be placed in a cab. Her round, pink-lidded eyes did not leave Dora's face for a second during the drive to the theatre. At last, she spoke.

"Har you the loidy wot heats the live snikes, an' mikes them come out of 'er hear?"

When Dora had to deny this distinction, the child withdrew her gaze, and sank into inertia.

III

THE play was over. Dora went into her dressing-room, and closed the door. She was alone, in the grave-clothes of Juliet, white lily buds woven in her fair hair, which fell to her waist in glistening lengths. She listened to the voices and tread of the scene-shifters pushing the tomb of the Capulets into its nightly limbo. She was

waiting for Bracebridge, and for the death of her happiness. When he came at the appointed time, the stricken look she had anticipated upon his face, she was so like the risen dead she had impersonated that a chill rippled over him.

Dora spoke first. The words were like small, cold drops.

"You need not tell me. I know you have seen Boldino. You have heard about me."

His honest eyes were clouded; indeed, there was a look of tears about them, as he laid four photographs upon the table, pictures of a girl Dora had thought dead and out of sight forever.

"It is as true, then, as I felt it must be, with such proof," he said, and looked away from her because it was unbearable. "Why did you make me love you?" he asked, miserably.

"Make you?" Dora faltered.

"By seeming to be what—what you are not."

"I did not lie to you, did I? When you questioned me, I told you my life had been a painful one, a dark one. You took me on faith. There is a jailer called Circumstance. Had I told you what horrors this jailer had locked me with, I should have lost you. I was not brave enough, you see. Besides, I felt bitter—not guilty."

She moved a chair to Bracebridge, and sat down near him.

"There is something Boldino left unsaid. You shall know that."

"If you could say it wasn't true!" Bracebridge prayed, leaning forward. "It seems impossible. Say it isn't true. Make me believe in you, Dora. Nothing else counts."

She moved her head, sadly.

"Though it seems impossible, it is true. How it came to be true, you shall hear." She went to him, and for a moment laid her hands upon his shoulders. "I am going to speak to you, dear, with such honesty as the dying give to those who wait for their last words. I am asking for no mercy because you love me. I am asking only for understanding. Before you

say good-bye to me to-night, I want you to say, once, that you see how I had no choice, how it had to be."

She began to pace between the long mirror and the couch, while Bracebridge watched her in dumb dismay. She to be the heroine of Boldino's disclosures—she who seemed at this moment to be so much more a spirit than a woman! He looked at the pale, perfect face, the woe of Calvary in the eyes, her softness, piteousness, helplessness. Nature had fashioned her for an infernal hypocrisy—since she was Jenny Green.

"Boldino," Dora commenced, in quiet tones, "knew me in Cuba, knew my life there. You shall hear what it was before that time, and after it. I was born in a London slum. I passed the house to-day. The tipsy woman who flung a bottle after me as I went by was curiously like the woman I called my mother. Whether she was or not I do not know. I was about ten years of age, a dirty, hungry, beaten animal, when I had what might be called my first experience of life. I was begging in a street in Soho. I may have been stealing, too—I do not know. I have a faint memory of sometimes taking things from people and places, and bringing them to my mother; so, possibly, I was plying both my trades, thieving and begging."

Bracebridge had open unbelief on his face. She even smiled at the look.

"It seems hard to take this in. As I stand here, I dare say I might serve as a human evidence of the text that out of evil good may come; or, perhaps, the water-lily born of filth is the simile suggested to you?" she asked, in wild self-mockery. "At any rate, it is true that I was begging in Soho—and, perhaps, stealing—at the age of ten. I remember a stout, dark-eyed man stopping to look at me with such inquiry and sharpness that I took to my heels, fearing arrest. Though he was heavy, he ran, and at last caught me. He was most friendly, and the outcome was my introduction to his wife in a room back of a public bar. I remember him saying to her, 'Look

closely. When the dirt is gone, she'll be a beauty.' I have a faint idea that I had not the slightest longing to see my mother. These people, Monsieur and Madame Villeneuve, fed me well. Soon I, and a few other female children, were taken across water to a strange city. There, in Paris, I settled down to a new existence under the espionage of the Villeneuves. For three years, I worked as a servant in their house, except during certain hours, when I, with the rest, was taught stage-dancing. I was thirteen, and large for my age, when I was put into a fancy costume, and placed on the stage at the back of the Villeneuve café to do my 'turn.' After dancing, I was sent among the men at the tables to drink with them, and so prevail upon them to buy more. I hardly recall the details of that experience. Time has very mercifully wiped away their clear memory, but, doubtless, they were in keeping with that environment. My mind was dark, my soul asleep, my eyes looked on vice, unshrinkingly. At thirteen, I could not write my name.

"Among the occasional frequenters of this cheap café, there was one rich man who drank champagne. He was a Cuban, named Tomaso Rica. One night, when it was discovered that I had smallpox, they put me on the Wintry street, wrapped in a blanket, to wait there for the hospital wagon. Rica befriended me. I learned afterward that the nurses in the hospital were lavishly paid by him for watching me and caring for me so that my face should not be scarred. When I was better, he took me to Dieppe, calling me his niece, and there I came slowly back to health. No father could have been kinder. Was it strange that I felt for him, for the first time in my life, a human affection?"

She did not expect an answer, and Bracebridge, sitting motionless, had none to give.

"Rica had me taught privately for a year. Then, he took me to a convent school in Passy. There," she said, in a thrilling voice, "light, intel-

ligence, seemed to burst into flower slowly within me. I came to look on the world with informed eyes. Christmas and Easter were spent with my guardian. He took me to the opera, the theatres; I had books, pretty clothes, trinkets. We drove in the Bois. I was taught to ride. I was taught to sing. I saw no one else. I never questioned his right to own me, any more than a kitten, that had been almost stoned to death, would question, if it could, the right of whoever might take it in to house it, warm it, save it."

She was silent a moment, then said, without shame, even with a proud defiance:

"Now, you know how I came to go to Cuba with Rica. I was sixteen years of age. I had not a friend in the world but him. In fact, I knew nothing of life save through him. No Eastern girl in a harem could feel more grateful to a master than I did to him. There was not a more willing slave on earth. By this time, I knew the world's difference between right and wrong. The books I had read, plays I had seen, things my schoolmates had said, had by degrees made me aware of moral values; but the realization was dull and indifferent. All of my early life, and the fatality which had led me into Rica's power while I was still a sleeping soul, robbed the knowledge of the force it would have had in the mind of a girl who had developed from the beginning under ordinary influences, in the normal way. I began to see it would have been better if I could have been like the other girls, who watched me with a shrinking curiosity as I rode or drove or walked with Rica. But I could not help being what I was, and I did not hope to be anything else. Besides, Rica, in reality a bad man, represented all the kindness I had personally known. These things are comparative."

She paused, then asked, with sudden pleading: "Do you understand at all?"

Bracebridge had covered his eyes with his fingers.

"It is terrible," he said.

"Ah, you see the hideousness of it, but you do not understand," she answered, desperately. "But wait. You must see—you must acquit me."

There were tears and passion in her voice when, after a moment, she resumed the story:

"How did I come at last to feel a haunting horror of myself in that beautiful, Cuban *casa*, where all was luxury, roses, sunshine? Not suddenly; not in a moment, nor an hour, nor a day. But, by degrees, I came to regard myself from a viewpoint that had been impossible before. As usual, with a woman, it was love, a pure, impulsive love, which brought self-knowledge.

"An English boy came to live in Matanzas. His mother had married the French consul there. We two, neither of us twenty, loved with a pure idealism for a little while, as Héloïse and Abélard loved. But, young though he was, he knew what I had not yet divined—the everlasting quality of the taint upon me—that I *must* drown, because, as a moral pariah, the world's opinion was a stone to drag me down, though I might try to rise, and pray, and try, and pray—and *pray!*" she cried, bitterly. "He talked of it to me frankly, and grieved that he could not marry me.

"Rica came upon us one early morning as we met secretly by the fountain in the cathedral garden. After that, his jealousy made him cruel. He told me then, for the first time, the truth about myself. Oh, he said some things to be remembered till I die. The English boy's mother told me the truth, too, as cuttingly as only some good women can, and then sent her son with a tutor on travels to the other end of the earth, just to keep him from such an evil as I. From the priest to whom I stole in my new agony, I also heard the truth, gently, sorrowfully, but in words that made me shudder at the thought of death. Yes, at last I knew to the utmost limit what I was. When I knew, I renounced that self with loathing, forever.

"You heard from Boldino how I let it appear that I had been drowned. I made my escape that way. I knew that only a belief in my death would prevent Rica from searching for me. I did not go penniless. I knew too well to what dire distress poverty can cast a soul and body. I took enough money to keep me in humble independence for a few years, while I made myself ready for a future that was to bear no finger-marks of my other life. I hid in New York and other large cities. I became a toiler. I made no friends. I was considered cold, severe, puritanical, by those I worked among—I, Jenny Green.

"My one delight at this time was the theatre. I used to sit in cheap seats, night after night, watching and studying. I felt that my chance lay there. I felt my fitness for it. I knew, with a sort of clairvoyance, I should succeed. When I reached London, I had forty pounds as capital. You know my small beginning on the stage—how I was noticed, better parts given me by degrees; you know the story of my success." She faced him squarely. "What have you to say?"

Bracebridge looked up at her. His eyes held a shuddering pity.

"Poor girl! how sorry I am for you!"

"Sorry?" her eyes were like fire in her white face; "sorry? Then you don't understand—not even now!"

She laid her hand on the knob of a door hidden by a curtain, and pushed it back.

"Come," she said, kindly, looking into the room, and holding out her hand.

Bracebridge had risen in wonder. The child from the Seven Dials stepped out. In every particular, she was as Dora had found her, except that she looked sleepy. She winked in the light, like a homeless cat, and chewed the end of her ragged veil. Dora stood behind her, her hands upon the hunched shoulders. In her white robes, lily-crowned, her eyes alight, she was like a pleading angel.

"I came upon this child to-day," she

said, slowly; "myself at ten—myself—except that I was even more malignantly marked, for I had beauty. Her name is Annie Mangin, mine was Jenny Green, both sodden, sleeping souls. I did not select, and, when I awoke, I was among the lost. Was that to my discredit? She does not select, and, when she awakens, she will find that I have saved her. Will that be to her credit? Oh, don't you see? don't you see?" She moved nearer to Bracebridge, and broke into sharp sobbing as she fell weakly to her knees. "Broken weeds in the stream—that's all—that's all!"

Dora's controlled pain had its way with her here. She became helpless, and wept as women do above a grave. After a little, she felt a touch upon her hair. She looked up. The child was not in the room. Bracebridge was bending over her, the look she had prayed for upon his face—not pity only, but comprehension and acquittal.

"Always look back upon your memory of me as you look now," she sobbed, and pressed her cheek against his hand.

He lifted her, tenderly.

"Dearest, it will not be good-bye."

She clung to him, murmuring, "Oh, is it true? is it true?"

"How well I understand—and even more than you have asked for. Yes, it was unquenchable purity which made you leave Cuba as you did; and it was honesty which kept you from telling me some lying story of yourself when I asked you to marry me; and it was honor which made you refuse Boldino's bargain, though it seemed to mean losing all——"

"Boldino!" she said, terror in her eyes as she drew back, searching his face; "we forgot Boldino!"

"Quite," said Bracebridge.

"But don't you see? He'll spread the story——"

"I forgot to mention that he is dead," said Bracebridge. "You see, he wouldn't give up those photographs for money. I tried to get them by force. He pulled out a pistol. My

man rushed in, got him by the neck from behind, the pistol went off, the bullet through his eye——”

“Dead?” Dora whispered.

“Dropped in a wink,” said Bracebridge.

“And you didn’t speak of it?” she faltered.

Bracebridge kissed her wet face.

“Ah, dear,” he said, “I was so miserable at first, and then so happy afterward, I couldn’t think of details.”

